



Cooking Up Native Traditions

Article

Minneapolis, Minnesota (Achieve3000, January 17, 2020). Canned beans. Boxed rice. Powdered milk. Jugs of vegetable oil. When he was growing up on a reservation in South Dakota, Sean Sherman's family cupboards were packed with these groceries. The foods were given to them by the U.S. government. Later in life, Sherman, whose family are Oglala Lakota Sioux, raised this question: Why didn't his family have foods that came from their culture?

And Sherman would have even more questions: Why weren't Native American recipes being more widely used? Where could those recipes even be found? And why don't more restaurants serve Native American foods?

Sherman was determined to find answers. He met with the oldest members of the community. He spoke with Native American chefs. And he chatted with people who knew Native American history. He learned how his ancestors grew, hunted, and prepared their food.

Then Sherman had an idea. He started his own catering business. He called it The Sioux Chef. He also started a group called NATIFS (North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems). His big plan? To bring back traditional Native American food to today's world.

But why was it lost in the first place?

Before Europeans arrived, Native Americans used traditional practices to grow and hunt many different kinds of food. But the arrival of Europeans changed things. Many traditional food sources, such as bison, were nearly destroyed.

Making matters worse: During the late 1800s, the U.S. government sent Native American children to boarding schools. They were taught cooking and farming methods. But they never learned how to do things the way their ancestors did.

That's why Sherman is bringing back Native American food traditions. His recipes avoid ingredients that were introduced by Europeans, such as beef and wheat. They use local plants and other natural ingredients. These include elk, quail, mushrooms, and wild rice.

For Sherman, going back to his roots is not just about connecting with his culture. Unhealthy eating is believed to have caused illnesses such as diabetes in Native American communities. Sherman wants to address this problem with the help of Native foods. They're better for people's health. They aren't loaded with salt, sugar, and bad fats.

So far, not many chefs serve traditional Native American ingredients. But this might be changing. The foods fit perfectly into the growing farm-to-table idea, which is all about using local fresh ingredients. But Native American food is *not* just a passing idea, says Sherman. It's a way of life.



Photo credit: AP/Amy Forliti
Sean Sherman whips up Native American recipes for his catering business, The Sioux Chef.

Video credit: The Sioux Chef

Dictionary

cater (*verb*) to provide food and drinks at a party, meeting, etc., especially as a job

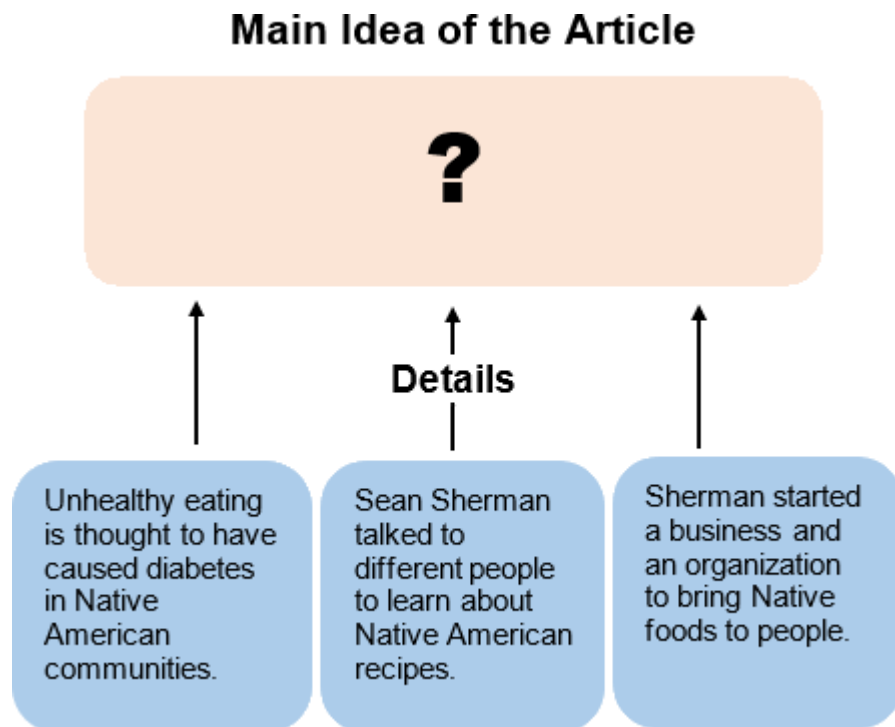
indigenous (*adjective*) produced, living, or existing naturally in a particular region or environment

recipe (*noun*) a set of instructions for making something from various ingredients

Activity

PART 1

Question 1



Based on the Article, which best replaces the question mark in the diagram above?

- (A) Native American foods fit perfectly into the growing farm-to-table movement, which is all about using local fresh ingredients.
- (B) Before the arrival of Europeans, Native peoples used traditional ways of growing and hunting food.
- (C) When Sean Sherman was growing up, his family cupboard was packed with canned beans, boxed rice, and vegetable oil.
- (D) Through NATIFS and The Sioux Chef, Sean Sherman is bringing back healthy Native American cooking traditions.

Question 2

Which of these is an opinion?

- (A) Through NATIFS and The Sioux Chef, Sean Sherman is bringing back Native food traditions.
- (B) The government meant to do the right thing when it gave free food to Native Americans.
- (C) Sean Sherman learned about traditional foods by talking with Native American chefs.
- (D) After the Europeans arrived, many traditional food sources, such as bison, were nearly destroyed.

Question 3

The Article states:

For Sherman, going back to his roots is not just about connecting with his culture. Unhealthy eating is believed to have caused illnesses such as diabetes in Native American communities. Sherman wants to address this problem with the help of Native foods. They're better for people's health. They aren't loaded with salt, sugar, and bad fats.

Why did the author include this passage?

- A To point out that the only real reason Sean Sherman has recreated Native recipes is that it connects him with his culture
- B To describe how Sean Sherman is using ingredients such as sodium, sugar, and fats to create new dishes
- C To argue that many people avoid the traditional Native American diet because it can lead to illness
- D To show that traditional Native American foods are healthy because they aren't high in sodium, fat, and sugar

Question 4

Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *recipe*?

- A method
- B council
- C ancestor
- D harvest

Question 5

Based on the Article, which is most likely to happen?

- A Many Native Americans will change over to an all-meat diet that includes large amounts of beef, elk, and quail.
- B More people will become familiar with the Native American diet through the work of NATIFS and The Sioux Chef.
- C Sean Sherman will include more canned beans, boxed rice, powdered milk, and vegetable oil in his recipes.
- D Sean Sherman will teach university courses that show students how to prepare European dishes with natural ingredients.

Question 6

Which information is **not** in the Article?

- A Which problem NATIFS hopes to address by bringing back traditional foods
- B Who Sherman turned to when he wanted to find out about Native foods
- C Why it is hard to find traditional ingredients, like mushrooms and wild rice
- D What foods were found in Sherman's cupboard when he was a boy

Question 7

Read this passage from the Article:

That's why Sherman is bringing back Native American food traditions. His recipes avoid ingredients that were *introduced* by Europeans, such as beef and wheat. They use local plants and other natural ingredients. These include elk, quail, mushrooms, and wild rice.

In this passage, the word *introduce* means _____.

- Ⓐ to prove that something is not true or real
- Ⓑ to bring something to a place for the first time
- Ⓒ to prepare food for eating by using heat
- Ⓓ to keep someone from using or doing something

Question 8

Which passage from the Article best supports the idea that Sean Sherman asked others for help when he wanted to learn more about traditional Native American foods?

- Ⓐ Sherman was determined to find answers. He met with the oldest members of the community. He spoke with Native American chefs. And he chatted with people who knew Native American history. He learned how his ancestors grew, hunted, and prepared their food.
- Ⓑ Before Europeans arrived, Native Americans used traditional practices to grow and hunt many different kinds of food. But the arrival of Europeans changed things. Many traditional food sources, such as bison, were nearly destroyed.
- Ⓒ Canned beans. Boxed rice. Powdered milk. Jugs of vegetable oil. When he was growing up on a reservation in South Dakota, Sean Sherman's family cupboards were packed with these groceries. The foods were given to them by the U.S. government.
- Ⓓ So far, not many chefs serve traditional Native American ingredients. But this might be changing. The foods fit perfectly into the growing farm-to-table idea, which is all about using local fresh ingredients. But Native American food is *not* just a passing idea, says Sherman. It's a way of life.